

Implementing Strategy: The Importance of Vision, Communication, and Support

**A Monograph
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Abstract

IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY: THE IMPORTANCE OF VISION, COMMUNICATION, AND SUPPORT by MAJ Edward S. Twaddell III, U.S. Army, 49 pages.

This study addresses how operational and strategic commanders best implement strategies to accomplish their specific goals by analyzing the three distinct tasks that strategic commanders must accomplish in order to successfully build the support they require: 1) develop and communicate a vision of the future state of affairs with regard to the strategic situation to subordinates, peers, and superiors; 2) generate the requisite political power to bridge the gaps between themselves and other peer actors in order to 3) influence superiors to support the strategy.

Using the cases of Generals Dwight D. Eisenhower and David H. Petraeus, this study demonstrates that support for a strategy can be built using a number of different methods. It finds that different methods are suitable in different situations, but that whatever method is used, the best course is to gain broad-based support for a strategy by gaining the support of subordinates, peers, and superiors.

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Introduction

As the effects of globalization have made themselves felt around the world, the landscape of world politics has become more and more complex. State governments interact regularly with non-state actors, multi-national corporations, and other organizations with multi-national representation, such as the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization. As access to an ever greater volume of information increases through the availability of internet access, the speed at which information disseminates to the individual level also increases. Individual citizens form opinions much faster from information which may or may not be accurate, and act according to those informed and misinformed opinions. Increased population mobility has allowed the accelerated spread of international business as well as increased the interaction of people who, previously, would never have come into contact with each other. This increased contact has had many economic, educational, and cultural benefits, but has also generated “[c]linical implications and health policy challenges associated with [the] movement of persons across barriers permeable to products, pathogens, and toxins.”¹ Indeed, “[m]odern transportation and increased tourism, business travel, and immigration [have] contributed to [the] dissemination of...high-impact pathogens.”²

This very brief, incomplete description of today’s world serves to illustrate the exceedingly complex nature of the global environment in which the strategic leaders of any nation must operate. All people, whatever group they may be members of, expect their leaders to

¹ Douglas W. MacPherson, et al., "Population Mobility, Globalization, and Antimicrobial Drug Resistance," *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 15, no. 11 (November 2009): 1727.

² Paul M. Arguin, Nina Marano, and David O. Freedman, "Globally Mobile Populations and the Spread of Emerging Pathogens," *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 15, no. 11 (November 2009): 1713.

provide them with a clear course of action which will allow the group to wend its way through this ever-increasingly complex world to a position in which the members of the group are better off than when they started. In groups that are relatively small, developing this course of action is relatively simple. For large groups, such as nation-states, developing and implementing a strategy is an exceedingly more complex process. Nevertheless, the members of these larger groups retain the same expectations of their strategic leadership that members of smaller groups do. The citizens of nation-states have no sympathy for the level of complexity that their leaders deal with and account for with every decision. They expect their strategic leaders to “[provide] vision and focus, capitalize on command and peer leadership skills, and [inspire] others to think and act.”³ These expectations are especially true of military strategic leaders. Citizens expect their military leaders to be experts in their fields, one of which is planning, and another of which is leading. As a result of these expectations of expertise, citizens also hold military leaders to higher standards of performance in providing the vision and focus mentioned above.

Research Question and Methodology

This study addresses the basic question of how do operational and strategic commanders best implement strategies to accomplish their specific goals? In the complex operating environment only broadly described above, operational and strategic commanders must find a way to understand the problems that face them, devise a strategy to address those problems, and then rally the resources and the support to execute that strategy. While collaboration with outside agencies with subject matter expertise is certainly helpful to commanders seeking to gain

³ Richard A. Chilcoat, “Strategic Art: The New Discipline for 21st Century Leaders,” (Carlisle Barracks, PA: United States Army War College, 1995), iv.

understanding of a situation and to develop strategies that are feasible, acceptable, and suitable, the actual processes of gaining understanding and developing a suitable strategy for implementation are essentially internal to the strategic leader's organization. Likewise, the same type of external coordination may be helpful from the standpoint of crafting a strategy that takes multiple viewpoints into consideration, but the process itself is internal to the capabilities of the organization building the strategy. Actually gaining and maintaining support for the implementation of the strategy from actors and agencies not under the strategic leader's span of control, however, is by its very nature, an external process. Strategic leaders can best implement their strategies by obtaining broad support for them from subordinates, peers, and superiors. This monograph analyzes the three distinct tasks that strategic commanders must accomplish in order to successfully build that support: 1) develop and communicate a vision of the future state of affairs with regard to the strategic situation to subordinates, peers, and superiors; 2) generate the requisite political power to bridge the gaps between themselves and other peer actors in order to 3) influence superiors to support the strategy.⁴

In examining this method of developing and implementing strategy, this study compares General Dwight D. Eisenhower's actions as a theater strategic commander in implementing his "broad front" strategy with the actions of General David H. Petraeus in his role as the Commander of Multi-National Forces – Iraq (MNF-I) as he sought to implement President George W. Bush's "New Way Forward" strategy for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Both of these strategic commanders had to develop and communicate personal visions of "what [they] want[ed]

⁴ This thesis represents a hybrid theory developed from the work done by Peter Senge, John Kotter, and Gary Yukl in their respective studies of organizational leadership.

to create”⁵ with regards to the strategic situation. Both generals had to communicate that vision to their subordinates, peers, and superiors, as well as to other actors in the decision-making system, in order to receive the support they needed to execute their respective strategies.

This study applies Peter Senge’s ideas of personal and shared vision, as well as his theory of “Possible Attitudes Toward a Vision” to these two cases to describe how Generals Eisenhower and Petraeus developed their strategic visions and the range of reactions that other actors could have had. This monograph then incorporates John Kotter’s ideas on generating power examine how the two generals bridged the power gap between themselves and the other actors in the decision-making system. Finally, this study will apply Gary Yukl’s discussion of influence processes and the facilitation of conditions to demonstrate how both Eisenhower and Petraeus were able to generate the support that they needed to implement their respective visions. By comparing General Eisenhower’s strategic leadership during the preparations for offensive operations in support of his “Broad Front” strategy to the strategic leadership provided by General Petraeus in early 2007 during the U.S. Army’s preparation for the “surge” of an additional 30,000 troops into the Iraq Theater of Operations, the author will demonstrate that this composite method of strategy implementation holds true today.

Significance

As the United States wages war in Iraq and Afghanistan, popular support for both conflicts has fallen off significantly.⁶ Strategic leaders within the U.S. government, both those in

⁵ Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1990), 206.

favor of and those opposed to continued involvement in these areas, seek to capture the support of the American people for their strategies to resolve these conflicts. The ability of U.S. strategic leaders to gain support for their visions will determine the strategy upon which the United States embarks and to which it devotes a measure of its citizenry and national financial resources for the next several years. It is imperative that both observers of as well as participants in this process understand the dynamics of gaining and maintaining support for a strategy if they are to attain any level of comprehension as these events unfold. Beyond this immediate issue, observers will be able to apply this understanding to future efforts to attain broad support for others' strategies as future events occur.

Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on the methods strategic leaders use to successfully implement their strategies. This is a completely separate discussion from that of the actual formulation of a strategy, or the success or failure of a given strategy. The discussion of why the "Broad Front" strategy did or did not succeed and whether the "surge" in Iraq has or has not succeeded is for others to debate. The method used by Generals Eisenhower and Petraeus to gain support for and to successfully implement their strategies is what is under consideration.

A second limitation of this study is that it does not seek to address change or growth in an organization. While there is little doubt that "[w]e perceive problems whenever circumstances

⁶ Zogby International, "Flashback: Zogby Polling Shows Declining U.S. Support for Iraq War," *Zogby International Web Site*, January 9, 2007, <http://www.zogby.com/news/ReadNews.cfm?ID=1231> (accessed February 8, 2010); Polling Report, Inc., "Iraq," *Polling Report, Inc. Web Site*, January 24, 2010, <http://www.pollingreport.com/iraq.htm> (accessed February 10, 2010); and Polling Report, Inc., "Afghanistan," *Polling Report, Inc. Web Site*, January 24, 2010, <http://www.pollingreport.com/afghan.htm> (accessed February 10, 2010).

do not conform to the way we think things ought to be,” and that we form strategies to address those problems in our organizations, this study does not attempt to address these efforts at “adaptive work.”⁷

Finally, this study is not an effort to address the dangers of leading in an environment which may not be supportive or accepting of radical or new ideas. This study does not seek to provide the reader with advice on “taking opportunities to lead, and staying alive” in the process of doing so.⁸

To summarize, this study is not about leading growth or change in an organization, or about addressing the risks attendant on such an endeavor. Rather, this study seeks to examine the methods used by strategic leaders to coordinate the efforts of their organizations with the efforts of other organizations that they do not necessarily have authority over.

Key Definitions and Concepts

This study uses portions of three different organizational leadership theories to explain how Generals Eisenhower and Petraeus successfully implemented their strategies. The authors of these theories did not write them with a purely military, or even governmental, audience in mind. Each uses slightly different definitions of *strategy*, *vision*, and *power*. While all refer to *strategic leaders*, none use the phrase *strategic commander*. Finally, the term *target audience* appears throughout this study, especially in the development of the theory. Since these terms are integral

⁷ Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1994), 31.

⁸ Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky, *Leadership on the Line* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 2.

to an understanding of the arguments set forth in this monograph, it is worth taking a moment to establish definitions for the sake of this discussion.

Strategy is “a prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives.”⁹ While this definition is fundamental to current military doctrine, its acknowledgement of the use of the instruments of national power other than the military makes it useful as a foundational term that also applies to other departments and agencies in the U.S. government. This study further delimits this definition to the achievement of theater objectives only. Focusing the study on the methods used by Generals Eisenhower and Petraeus to gain support for and implement their vision, rather than to open a debate as to whether or not these officers did in fact command at the strategic level of war allows a more focused examination of these officers’ respective strategic leadership methods rather than their success or failure on the battlefield.

The term *vision* can have several meanings that appear to be similar. However, there are enough differences between these meanings that without careful selection, imprecise use can result in a great deal of confusion. Since this monograph will predominantly refer to Peter Senge’s theories on vision development, it is only fitting to use his definition: “a picture of the future we seek to create.”¹⁰

Power is another term which can have a variety of meanings, depending on which theorist is using it, and in what context. “Power generally refers to an agent’s capacity to

⁹ Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001, as amended through August 2009), 524.

¹⁰ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 9.

influence a target person.”¹¹ However, this definition does not account for strategic leaders’ occasional need to influence not only actions, but attitudes, or the need to be able to influence more than one person at a time. This broadening of the definition will establish a linkage with the theory of shared vision. Therefore, this monograph will define power as “an agent’s potential influence over the attitudes and behavior of one or more designated target persons.”¹² Within the overarching category of power, there are several different sources from which multiple types of power flow, to include *position power*, *personal power*, and *political power*.¹³ Positional power is “influence derived from legitimate authority, control over resources and rewards, control over punishments, control over information, and control over the organization of the work and the physical work environment”, whereas “personal power includes potential influence derived from task expertise...friendship, and loyalty.”¹⁴ Political power, however, is a derivative type of power. It occurs when strategic leaders “use their existing position power to transform and magnify the initial basis of power in unique ways.”¹⁵ These sub-varieties of power will become more important during the “theory development” portion of this study, which differentiates between the various ways in which a strategic leader can exercise influence over another person or several people, and the different effects those methods may have.

¹¹ Gary Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations*, 4th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 177.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 179.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 191. Yukl specifies that political power is derived from position power, but does not take into account the same types of transformation or magnification processes as applied to personal power. Intuitively, however, there does not seem to be any reason that a strategic leader could not magnify or transform personal power, especially charisma, into political power.

“Strategic leaders include military and Army civilian leaders at the major command through Department of Defense (DOD) levels.”¹⁶ While this definition is sufficient as it stands for the purposes of this monograph, and certainly for the purposes of Army doctrine, it must be understood that it is an inclusive definition, not an exclusive one. There are certainly strategic leaders in the other U.S. military services, as well as the other agencies and departments which make up the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government. What is important to note is that this definition states that strategic leaders serve at the major command (MACOM) and higher levels.

Strategic commanders make up a subset of strategic leaders. Simply put, strategic commanders are strategic leaders serving in command billets of the U.S. military. This subset of strategic leaders bears the additional burdens of command in addition to the responsibilities they have in common with non-military strategic leaders.

The final term in this section is the term *target audience*. This term refers specifically to a “particular group of people, identified as the intended recipient of an advertisement or message.”¹⁷ However, this study will use a slightly wider definition that includes single individuals as well as groups of people to reflect the fact that strategic leaders will occasionally speak to one specific individual in an attempt to influence them, rather than a group of people.

¹⁶ Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 6-22: Army Leadership: Competent, Confident, Agile* (Washington, DC: Army Publishing Directorate, 2006), 3-7.

¹⁷ WebFinance, Inc., “Target Audience Definition,” *BusinessDictionary.com Web Site*, January 31, 2010, <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/target-audience.html> (accessed March 11, 2010).

Theory Development

Overview

Before analyzing the usefulness of a model for developing broad support for a strategy, through the historical lenses of Generals Eisenhower's and Petraeus' efforts, it is necessary to explicate the model itself. By way of review, the three tasks which strategic leaders must successfully accomplish in order to gain support for and successfully implement a strategy are: 1) the development and communication of their vision; 2) the generation of sufficient power to bridge any gaps that may exist between the strategic leader and his peers; and 3) influencing superiors to support the strategy.

Developing and Communicating a Vision

As strategic leaders ponder their strategy for a given situation, they must consider how they will gain support for that strategy. Gaining support from other actors such as subordinates, immediate superiors, or peer-like strategic leaders in other organizations requires that the strategic leader in question must not only successfully communicate his vision of the strategy to those actors, he must also convince them that the vision is one worth pursuing. In the best of cases, the strategic leader is so successful in this endeavor that he is able to not only gain the support of the people he presents his ideas to, he is also able to get them to share his vision with him. "A vision is truly shared when [the actors] have a similar picture and are committed to one another having it, not just each of [them], individually, having it."¹⁸ When this occurs, the

¹⁸ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 206. Although Senge addresses a single organization and the requirement of that organization's leader to express a vision to the members of that organization, there is no

strategic leader is no longer working alone to implement the strategy. In fact, the successful implementation of the strategy is now the goal of the strategic leader and every other actor that he has managed to gain a commitment from.

This, then, is one end of a spectrum of responses that the strategic leader may receive when he communicates his vision to his target audience. What of the other end? Just as the most positive response to the vision results in the target audience taking the vision up as their own and actively working in conjunction with the strategic leader to implement it, so the opposite response is also possible: the actor or actors which the strategic leader attempts to communicate his vision to may decide to actively work against the implementation of the vision.¹⁹

Having anchored the two extremes of the spectrum of possible reactions, it is now possible to address the range of possible reactions that a strategic leader may receive to his vision. From commitment to active resistance, these reactions are: enrollment, genuine compliance, formal compliance, grudging compliance, apathy, and noncompliance.²⁰

This quickly leads to the next question of “how much support is enough?” Answering this question may seem like a simple matter of comparing of how much support the strategic leader

reason that the strategic leader cannot use the same methods that he used to communicate his vision within his organization to actors outside of his organization.

¹⁹ Senge lists several possible attitudes towards a vision, ranging from “commitment” (already mentioned) to “noncompliance”, a refusal to support the vision, and “apathy”, in which the target audience is neither for nor against the vision. Senge does not address the possibility that an actor that the strategic leader targets may find the strategic leader’s vision so abhorrent that they actively work against the strategic leader’s vision not only by refusing to participate in it themselves, as Senge’s noncompliant actor would do, but by attempting to advance an agenda of their own which detracts from the support that the strategic leader is trying to garner.

²⁰ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 219-220. Senge places “noncompliance” ahead of “apathy” in his continuum of possible reactions, but in fact an apathetic actor may sway across the line of support several times for a variety of reasons, whereas the noncompliant and active resisters are entrenched quite firmly on the “non-support” side of the line.

thinks they have to how much they think they need in order to implement the strategy. In reality, arriving at this answer is actually a much more complex process. Without even taking into consideration the vagaries and inconsistencies of political alliances and infighting, strategic leaders must still consider whether they have the support of the key personnel that control the resources that the strategic leader requires to implement the strategy. Thus, it is not necessarily sufficient for a strategic leader to have many supporters, although this is certainly helpful. The answer to the question, then, is that the strategic leader has enough support when he has access to enough resources to implement the strategy. It is here that the question of power enters the discussion.

Generating Power

Power, an agent's potential influence over the attitudes and behaviors of one or more designated target persons, is "important not only for influencing subordinates, but for also for influencing peers, superiors, and people outside of the organization."²¹ In order for a strategic leader to gain the material assets and resources that he needs to successfully implement his strategy, he must first identify those agents outside of his own organization who control those assets or resources that he needs. Next, he must find a way to influence those agents, who have now become target audiences, in order to gain their support and place the assets and resources that he requires at his disposal.

In finding a way to influence his target audience, the strategic leader must assess his target audience and exercise the appropriate level and type (or combination of types) of power to

²¹ Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations*, 9.

achieve the effect that he wants (that is, their support of his strategy) on the audience's "attitudes, perceptions [and] behavior".²² In conducting this assessment, it is crucial that the strategic leader understand the power acquisition and loss processes that are unique to his relationship with a particular target audience. These processes will be different for each target audience because the relationship that the strategic leader has with each audience is unique. Therefore, the strategic leader must conduct an assessment of the power acquisition and loss processes for every different audience from which he seeks support. As such, the strategic leader will need to approach each audience in a different way in order to achieve the effect he desires.

After conducting his assessment of what level and type of power will bring about the effect that he wants from his audience, the strategic leader must then assess whether or not he has the personal, positional, or political power that he will need to gain the support of his target audience. If not, the strategic leader must then decide how to go about generating the power he needs to influence his target audience in the way he desires. The problem that the strategic leader faces is that his choice of methods with which to influence his audience, that is, his choice of types of power, is often limited when attempting to gain support from an audience that is not internal to his own organization. Put more simply, the fact that a strategic leader does not have the tool of positional power available to him when attempting to influence an audience outside of his own organization limits him to the exercise of personal and political power. The fact that the target audience has something that strategic leader desires, whether that "thing" is control of a resource or influence with others, makes the strategic leader's problem even more acute. The mere fact that the strategic leader places value on the resource that the target audience possesses

²² Ibid., 176.

gives the target audience a power advantage because “power flows to those who have resources that others need.”²³

Having recognized that the target audience has an advantage over him in relative levels of power as a result of having something he wants, and having recognized that he has a smaller number of tools with which to equalize this power differential, the strategic leader must choose what tool or tools he will use to bridge this power gap. Again, the strategic leader must make an assessment of “what exactly...[his] position [is] vis-à-vis the target”²⁴ audience. From this assessment the strategic leader decides which of the already-limited choice of power generation tools at his disposal will be effective. The greater the disparity in power between the strategic leader and his target audience, “the more [the strategic leader] will be forced to use slower, higher involvement strategies”²⁵ rather than faster, more direct, and perhaps more confrontational strategies.

These analyses by the strategic leader leave three methods with which to generate power and thus influence his target audience. One method is for the strategic leader to use political processes to increase his own positional power, and then coerce the target audience into supporting the strategic leader’s strategy. While this may be the fastest way to achieve compliance, it may also be the least effective in convincing the target audience to commit to the strategic leader’s vision and desired strategy. A second method for the strategic leader to generate power is to use his own power in the service of the target audience. By determining what the

²³ James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge: How to Get Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations*, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1987), 171.

²⁴ John P. Kotter, *Power and Influence: Beyond Formal Authority*, (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1985), 92.

²⁵ Ibid.

target audience needs to accomplish its own agenda and then offering to become a resource to them, the strategic leader increases his own power by establishing that he has something that the target audience wants as well. Using this technique, the strategic leader effectively becomes a power broker in his efforts to gain support to implement his own strategy.²⁶ This method is certainly less confrontational than the first, and can establish a type of quid-pro-quo relationship that can, over time, strengthen into a personal relationship which may serve both the strategic leader and the target audience in good stead in the future. Finally, the strategic leader may attempt a third method of generating power: the time-honored technique of networking.²⁷ While this technique requires the strategic leader to invest the most time and effort of the three methods, it is the least confrontational of the three, and has the potential to be the most effective, as it “forecasts that in a given situation or problem, several leaders...are called upon to intervene on the basis of their position of power...so that the situation or the problem can be successfully managed.”²⁸ This method derives its power from the effective communication of a vision in that there is no other way for a strategic leader to convince multiple audiences to “intervene on the basis of their position[s] of power”, that is, to fully bring their own power to bear to implement the strategy.

In building support to implement their strategies, a strategic leader has several assessments to make and questions to answer. He must ascertain what agents outside of his own organization have control of the assets and resources he requires to implement his strategy. He must decide which of those agents he is going to address as target audiences with efforts to gain

²⁶ Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 181-182.

²⁷ Ibid., 184.

²⁸ Lilly Lemay, “The Practice of Collective and Strategic Leadership in the Public Sector,” *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal* 14, no. 1 (March 2009): 4, <http://www.innovation.cc/volumes-issues/vol14-no1.html> (accessed December 24, 2009).

their support. The strategic leader must assess the power gap between himself and his target audience, and must then decide what methods he has at his disposal to bridge that gap. Finally, the strategic leader must decide from amongst the methods available to him which he will use to influence his target audience. Time may be a constraining factor for the strategic leader in making this decision.²⁹ If little time is available, the strategic leader may find it necessary to attempt a more direct, confrontational method of bridging the power gap between himself and his target audience, which may be successful in generating the target audience's compliance, but not in generating the level of commitment that the strategic leader may be seeking.

Influencing Superiors

At some point in the process of attempting to implement a strategy, the strategic leader must seek the support of his superiors. Those superiors may be direct supervisors, embodied in one person, or they may be several people, or even organizations of people that make up the bodies to which a strategic leader must answer. Additionally, the point in time at which a strategic leader approaches his superiors for support of his vision is a conscious decision in and of itself. The strategic leader bases the timing of this decision on the relationship that he has with his superiors, including the level of trust that they have in him, the number and type of resources which the strategy requires for successful implementation, and the possible second and third order effects that could result from the implementation of the strategy that the strategic leader's superiors may wish to be apprised of prior to their actual occurrence.

²⁹ Richard B. Myers and Albert C. Pierce, "On Strategic Leadership," *Joint Forces Quarterly* no. 54 (3rd Quarter 2009): 13.

Regardless of the actual point in time at which the strategic leader decides to seek the support of his superiors, or the reasons for which he chooses that time, the strategic leader must still secure that support using some combination of influence processes. Some of these influence processes are: consultation, legitimating tactics, rational persuasion, coalition tactics, and application of pressure.³⁰

If the strategic leader seeks to gain the support of his superior from the very beginning of the strategy development process, he may approach the superior prior to actually developing the strategy and consult with him or her, attempting to co-opt that superior by “allowing the [superior] to participate in making the decision[s]” which surround the development of the strategy.³¹ In so doing, the strategic leader gives up some of his own power and influence, but gains the greater power and influence of the superior in the process, giving the strategic leader a net gain in power overall.³²

Legitimizing tactics, the “attempt to establish one’s legitimate authority or right to make a particular type of request” may be the most likely tactic to succeed in securing a superior’s support for a strategy.³³ This is especially true when the strategy is within the superior’s expectations of the role and responsibilities of the strategic leader proposing the strategy, or if the superior sees the strategy as relatively benign and unlikely to generate significant political

³⁰ Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations*, 208. Yukl describes a total of nine influence tactics, including inspirational appeals, ingratiation, personal appeals, and exchange, in addition to the techniques discussed here. Yukl discusses using these influence processes as methods which managers may use to influence their subordinates in order to achieve the results they desire, but fails to address the possibilities that these tactics offer subordinates seeking to influence their superiors.

³¹ Ibid., 210.

³² Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 182.

³³ Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations*, 208.

turmoil. However, if the strategy in question is one that is potentially contentious, or involves the superior taking some appreciable amount of risk, the strategic leader may have to rely on the legitimate authority of others, to include an even higher level of authority than that of the superior from whom he is seeking support. This could take the form of the strategic leader showing his superior that the proposed strategy supports the intent of the greater authority, or it could require the strategic leader to present his case to the superior.

If the strategic leader presents “logical arguments and factual evidence that [the strategy] is the best way to achieve an objective or accomplish a task”, then he has changed from legitimating tactics to rational persuasion as a method with which to develop power between himself and his superiors.³⁴ Rational persuasion tactics may fail if the strategic leader’s target audience does not share the same objectives as the strategic leader.

If all of these influence tactics fail to gain the target audience’s support, the strategic leader must then assess whether this superior’s support is essential to the implementation of his strategy, or if it is something that he can do without. If the strategic leader assesses the target audience’s support as essential, he has little choice but to proceed on to influence methods which the superior may perceive as threatening, such as coalition tactics, in which the strategic leader “seeks the aid of others to persuade the target [audience] to do something, or uses the support of others to as a reason for the target [audience] to agree also.”³⁵

Finally, the strategic leader may simply attempt to apply pressure to his superior. The use of “threats, warnings, and assertive behavior such as repeated demands or frequent checking to

³⁴ Ibid., 209.

³⁵ Ibid., 211.

see if the [superior] has complied with the request [for support]” fall into “apply pressure” category of influence methods.³⁶ Certainly, this final type of method can be fraught with hazard, depending on the relationship that exists between the strategic leader and the target audience, but it is nonetheless a method which remains at the strategic leader’s disposal.

Another, more subtle manner in which the strategic leader can gain the support of his superiors is by taking advantage of the current conditions which facilitate the implementation of a new strategy. Perhaps the condition which carries the most weight in the decision-making process of a superior deliberating over whether or not and to what extent to support the strategic leader’s vision is follower disenchantment.³⁷ In situations where the superior is a political office-holder, the perception of the voting populace may weigh heavily on what types of policies and strategies the superior supports. The strategic leader who is able to craft a vision and strategy in such a way that it either addresses or takes advantage of the concerns that a superior has about the environmental conditions which the superior must address may find a much more receptive ear than a strategic leader who fails to take these conditions into account.

Summary

At the strategic level, it is apparent that the implementation of a new idea to accomplish theater objectives using the elements of national power requires the use of many different resources and assets. Those strategic leaders who seek to implement new ideas must therefore be

³⁶ Ibid. Again, Yukl addresses the hazards associated with the use of this influence tactic when dealing with subordinates, but does not address the hazards of using it in attempting to influence a superior. While it may initially appear foolish for a strategic leader (or anyone, for that matter) to attempt to pressure their superiors, it is still a valid technique that may have some usefulness in very specific situations in which the subordinate strategic leader perceives a significant power differential in his favor.

³⁷ Ibid., 303.

able to gain the support of the peers and superiors who maintain control of those assets and resources. This section has examined the tools that a strategic leader has at his disposal with which to generate and communicate a vision of his idea, gain the support of peers, and then gain the support of superiors. While this model is not prescriptive, it does link the three tasks which strategic leaders must accomplish in order to be successful. This study will then analyze the historical cases of Generals Eisenhower and Petraeus to demonstrate how these two strategic leaders applied the principles of this model to obtain the support they needed to implement their strategies.

Strategic Context

General Eisenhower

In September of 1944, General Dwight D. Eisenhower had a decision to make. The Allied forces had moved so fast after breaking out from the hedgerows of Normandy that they were out-running their supply lines. “For logistical purposes, the invasion of Europe had been geared to a methodical advance” which would have allowed the Allies to maintain their logistical support as they moved forward.³⁸ However, the rapid Allied advance against retreating German forces quickly extended the supply lines to such an extent that it became necessary to hold three divisions newly arrived in the European Theater back from the front. These divisions instead received orders to press their truck assets into service, moving supplies forward to the 21st Army Group under Field Marshal Montgomery.³⁹ If he was to continue his “broad front” strategy

³⁸ Charles B. MacDonald, “The Decision to Launch Operation Market-Garden,” in *Command Decisions*, ed. Kent Roberts Greenfield (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1987), 432.

³⁹ D. J. Haycock, *Eisenhower and the Art of Warfare: A Critical Appraisal*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2004), 111.

Eisenhower had to choose between consolidating the Allies' logistical lines and continuing to press the German forces to the East. This strategy clashed with both Field Marshal Montgomery, who saw "only one policy: 'to halt the right and strike with the left, or halt the left and strike with the right,'"⁴⁰ and General Bradley, who also advocated "the 'main thrust', [with both] of them wanting to be entrusted with it."⁴¹ Although the two subordinate commanders disagreed on who should have the responsibility for conducting the main thrust, both felt that the Allies' strategy should be to consolidate supplies behind either the northern or southern arm of the Allied Expeditionary Force, thus allowing them to continue to fight. The strategies which Montgomery and Bradley advocated may have gained more traction with Eisenhower in other circumstances, but the political environment of coalition warfare convinced him otherwise. "If the United States had had a smaller and weaker coalition partner, Eisenhower might have felt justified in a single-thrust military operation in the autumn of 1944, but so long as Winston Churchill led Britain, such a decision was unimaginable."⁴²

Under these conditions, Eisenhower "always visualized that as soon as a substantial destruction of the enemy forces in France could be accomplished, [the Allies] should advance rapidly on the Rhine by pushing through the Aachen gap in the north and through the Metz gap in

⁴⁰ Cornelius Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 1974), 66.

⁴¹ Ibid., 66-67.

⁴² Carlo D'este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1995), 672. D'este speaks of the political fallout that might have fractured the Allied Coalition if Eisenhower had shunted Montgomery and the forces under his command (including the Canadian contingent) aside. This said, if Eisenhower had consistently favored Montgomery and his 21st Army Group, one can argue that the American public would have had the same reaction that D'este posits the British would have had, and would have expressed through Winston Churchill.

the south.”⁴³ With this clear vision in his own mind, General Eisenhower had decided to implement a strategy of continued pursuit on a broad front, rather than pausing the Allied advance to strengthen his logistical lines, or weighting either Field Marshall Montgomery’s 21st or General Bradley’s 12th Army Groups to pursue a “main thrust” strategy. General Eisenhower now had to gain support, or better yet commitment, from General Bradley and Field Marshal Montgomery.⁴⁴ Additionally, General Eisenhower would have to gain support for this strategy from his superiors in the War Department: Generals George Marshall and Henry Arnold, as well as the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Each of these individuals and groups had their own agendas and ideas about how Eisenhower should conduct the war in Europe, and the ideas of one often clashed with the ideas of another. Eisenhower’s challenge was to balance these ideas with his own while still maintaining relations with the other members of the Allied Coalition.

General Petraeus

In January 2007, President George W. Bush introduced what would become known as his “new way forward” strategy for the ongoing war in Iraq. After almost four years of a war marked

⁴³ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Eisenhower Diaries*, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981), 127.

⁴⁴ General Bradley was General Eisenhower’s subordinate by virtue of both rank and position and could have exercised this positional power by ordering Bradley to comply with his vision. Although such an action would not likely have led Bradley to commit to Eisenhower’s vision, it would have achieved the effect that Eisenhower desired. A much more complex relationship existed between Eisenhower and Field Marshal Montgomery. Although Montgomery was subordinate to Eisenhower by virtue of his position, the political intricacies of U.S.-British relations placed both officers on even footing as the senior officers of their respective nations in the European Theater of Operations. Additionally, the British government promoted Montgomery to the rank of Field Marshal in September, 1944, eliminating the difference in rank between the two officers. An overt display of positional power by Eisenhower might have had disastrous effects on relations between the two countries. This complexity forced Eisenhower to treat Montgomery more as a peer than as a subordinate, and also to use the same methods one would use with peers to gain their support.

by multiple missteps and failing public support, the announcement resulted in “an immediate counterattack” by Democratic Party members of the U.S. Congress.⁴⁵ Representatives John Murtha (D-PA) and Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), as well as Senator John Kerry (D-MA) all spoke out against President Bush’s strategy. Murtha “vowed to try and block Bush’s plan from his perch as chairman of the House defense appropriations subcommittee.”⁴⁶ Pelosi argued that the Bush administration had attempted the same strategy twice before without success, while Kerry stated “this plan is neither new nor forward-looking” and “there’s no military solution in Iraq. There is only a political solution, and the president has no plan to achieve it.”⁴⁷

The administration argued that President Bush’s new strategy sought to address three specific theater objectives: “[weaken] the insurgency; [help to] establish credible and effective Iraqi security forces...responsible to the government and capable of protecting the Iraqi people; and [strengthen] the Iraqi government by easing sectarian tensions and advancing national reconciliation.”⁴⁸ The task of implementing President Bush’s strategy and achieving these objectives in a political environment characterized by partisan disagreement and failing public support fell to the new commanding general of Multi-National Forces – Iraq, General David Petraeus.

⁴⁵ Kathy Kiely and Bill Nichols, “Democrats reject Bush’s ‘way forward’ – USATODAY.com,” *USA Today*, January 11, 2007, http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2007-01-10-dems-bush-iraq_x.htm (accessed January 4, 2010).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ James Phillips, “President Bush’s New Way Forward in Iraq,” *The Heritage Foundation Web Site*, January 11, 2007, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Iraq/wm1304.cfm> (accessed January 4, 2010), 1.

In order to implement the President's strategy, General Petraeus had to take ownership of the strategic goals and form them into his own vision. He then had to communicate that vision to his peers, including Ambassador Ryan Crocker from the State Department, the Chief of Naval Operations, and the military leaders of the Coalition member nations, in order to garner their support. These peers all controlled assets or had influence that General Petraeus needed to successfully implement President Bush's strategy. Ambassador Crocker, as the Department of State's senior official in Iraq, had both access to State Department assets as well as a level of influence with the Secretary of State, Ms. Condoleeza Rice. Admiral Michael Mullen, the Chief of Naval Operations, controlled the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps assets that General Petraeus needed to complete the complement of military forces that he would need to execute the strategy.⁴⁹ General Petraeus's military peers amongst the Coalition member nations held influence with their respective governments, and could prove crucial in convincing those governments to maintain or increase their military commitments in Iraq.

Finally, General Petraeus would have to convince legislators in the Democrat-controlled U.S. Congress to provide him with the funds he believed he would need to execute the strategy, as well as the time he needed to implement it. General Petraeus would have to convince both the Congress as well as the Bush administration to allow him the autonomy he would need to execute the strategy within the boundaries of the President's intent. The political sensitivity of the Iraq

⁴⁹ While, as a service chief, Admiral Mullen held a position senior to him, General Petraeus was not one of Admiral Mullen's subordinates. This, in addition to the fact that the Iraq War had taken on such a prominent role in the politics of the time, thus making General Petraeus a much more prominent and powerful figure, served to level the playing field between these senior officers. As a result, I treat their relationship as one between peers, rather than as one between a senior and a subordinate.

War, as the casualty count passed the mark of 3,000 service members killed,⁵⁰ made accomplishing this last task extremely difficult.

Application of the Theory

Introduction

This section of the study applies the theory developed earlier in the paper to two historical cases outlined above. By overlaying the model derived from the theory onto a historical framework, it lays the groundwork to analyze the actions of Generals Eisenhower and Petraeus as they sought to implement their strategies. This, in turn, will allow synthesis of lessons from the two strategic leaders before finally providing a final evaluation of the theory as a whole.⁵¹

General Eisenhower

Having decided to pursue the broad front strategy, General Eisenhower approached the issue of gaining the commitment of his two subordinate commanders as two separate problems, befitting the fact that they were two different individuals with different personalities with different backgrounds and worldviews. By identifying both Montgomery and Bradley as separate target audiences with resources he needed rather than a single target audience, Eisenhower recognized the differences between the two officers and began a separate assessment of each.

⁵⁰ CNN, "U.S. deaths in Iraq reach 3,000 – CNN.com," Cable News Network, <http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/01/01/iraq.death toll/index.html> (accessed January 6, 2010).

⁵¹ Profound Learning Systems, "Profound Learning Systems: Application and Skills Development," Profound Learning Systems, <http://www.profoundlearning.com/Content/EducationSolutions/educationApplicationSkill.html> (accessed January 6, 2010).

General Eisenhower's assessment of how to approach Field Marshal Montgomery revolved around three subordinate assessments: Eisenhower's assessment of Montgomery as a military commander; his assessment of his own relationship with Montgomery; and his assessment of the political relationship between Britain and the United States, and the effects of that relationship on the Allied coalition. Together, these three pieces of information would lead Eisenhower to use the first two techniques described during theory development: the use of political power and placing his own power in the service of Montgomery's agenda, to achieve support from the British Field Marshal.

In assessing Montgomery as a commander, Eisenhower took into account the Field Marshal's prior battlefield performances. Although Montgomery had enjoyed many successes, he gave Eisenhower the impression that he "always wanted everything and he never did anything fast in his life."⁵² This penchant for slow action contributed to what was, at best, already an oppositional relationship between the two senior officers.⁵³ Montgomery "always, implicitly and sometimes explicitly, considered he was a better commander on the battlefield than Eisenhower."⁵⁴ In fact, Montgomery "saw, 'right from the beginning that Ike had simply no experience for the job [of Supreme Commander],' and while history...would record Eisenhower 'as a very good Supreme Commander, as a field commander he was very bad, very bad.'"⁵⁵ For

⁵² Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 76.

⁵³ Ibid., 67.

⁵⁴ Ronald Lewin, *Montgomery as Military Commander*, (New York, NY: Stein and Day, 1971), 234.

⁵⁵ Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 65.

his part, Eisenhower “felt that the Field Marshal was ‘a psychopath...such an egocentric’ that everything he had ever done ‘was perfect...he never made a mistake in his life.’”⁵⁶

Despite the fractious nature of their relationship, Eisenhower was well aware of the effect that a rift between his self and “Britain’s favorite general” could have on the U.S.-Britain Coalition.⁵⁷ Eisenhower assessed that if he allowed his personal relationship to interfere with his command of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, the already-high political tensions might become unbearable. For this reason, Eisenhower “maintain[ed] a delicate balance, and follow[ed] to the letter the plans of the Combined Chiefs of Staff.”⁵⁸ In doing so, Eisenhower was able to maintain his political power by remaining in good standing in the eyes of the Combined Chiefs, and placed Montgomery at a disadvantage in relative power levels. Nevertheless, the political sensitivity of the situation limited the choice of tools that Eisenhower could use to generate sufficient power to gain Montgomery’s support.

Given the short amount of time available to him between his assuming of command of all ground forces in the European Theater and the beginning of the allied forces push to the Rhine River, Eisenhower would not have been able to build power through networking.⁵⁹ Given the sensitivity of his relationship with Montgomery and the dire consequences that a rift between the two officers could have for the Allied coalition, building positional power through political means

⁵⁶ Ibid., 77.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 76.

⁵⁹ General Eisenhower assumed command of all ground forces in Europe from Montgomery on September 1, 1944, the same day on which Montgomery received his promotion to Field Marshal. Since Eisenhower and Montgomery had served in the same theaters of operation since 1943, when Eisenhower served as the Commander of the North African Theater of Operations, one could argue that Eisenhower had had plenty of time to network. However, since Eisenhower had not been successful in doing so by September of 1944, I maintain that the remaining time was not sufficient, either.

and coercing Montgomery into support was also risky proposal. This left Eisenhower with the option of using his power in support of Montgomery. In being so vociferous in advocating a strong attack along a northern axis, Montgomery made it clear that his agenda was to attack into Germany with the 21st Army Group.⁶⁰ In order to advance this idea, Montgomery required a greater portion of an exceptionally limited logistical support capability. General Eisenhower had the power to re-allocate those resources, and he placed that power in Montgomery's service by agreeing to support his attack, in a limited fashion and as part of a larger advance under Eisenhower's broad-front strategy.⁶¹ Specifically, "this plan...required a succession of attacks, first by the 21st Army Group, then by the First Army, and, finally, by the Third Army, with supply priorities shifting as necessary."⁶² Eisenhower's tactic was thus sufficient to gain support from Montgomery, who began final the coordinations for what would become Operation MARKET-GARDEN when he believed that he had secured the logistical support he needed.⁶³

Simultaneous to developing power with Montgomery, Eisenhower had to assess Lieutenant General Omar Bradley and develop influence with him. In the same manner as he assessed Montgomery, Eisenhower assessed Bradley's abilities as a commander and his personal relationship with the commander of the 12th Army Group. A key difference in this assessment was that the political sensitivity that resulted from the fact that Eisenhower and Montgomery

⁶⁰ Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 73-74. Montgomery advanced his agenda for a single thrust on three separate occasions: August 17, 1944, in person on August 23, and again by cable on September 4.

⁶¹ Roland G. Ruppenthal, "Logistics and the Broad-Front Strategy," in *Command Decisions*, ed. Kent Roberts Greenfield (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1987), 425.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ It is necessary to reiterate here that this study does not seek to debate the reasons for the success or failure of the Broad Front strategy, or of Operation MARKET-GARDEN, but rather the manner in which Eisenhower generated sufficient power to implement his strategy.

were of different nationalities was not a consideration because Bradley was a fellow American officer.

Eisenhower assessed Bradley as “about the best rounded, well balanced senior officer...in the service.”⁶⁴ Furthermore, Eisenhower did not keep his assessment of Bradley’s abilities to himself, recommending Bradley’s promotion to General Marshall, the Chief of Staff of the Army, on two separate occasions.⁶⁵ On a personal level, Eisenhower and Bradley had been classmates together at the United States Military Academy. Eisenhower actually “wrote Bradley’s portrait for the *Howitzer* [the West Point yearbook]...[in which] he wrote ‘if he keeps up the clip he’s started, some of us will some day [*sic*] be bragging that, ‘Sure General Bradley was a classmate of mine.’”⁶⁶

Having known Bradley since their days together as cadets in the same West Point class, Eisenhower had had almost thirty years during which he could associate with his former classmate and gain the power to influence him. By the time they were senior officers on the battlefields of Europe, Eisenhower had fully developed power relationship with Bradley that made the use of political maneuvering to establish greater positional power unnecessary. Nevertheless, to ensure that the balance of power was in his favor, Eisenhower used the same method with Bradley that he had with Montgomery. By placing the resources that he had control of in Bradley’s service, even for a short period of time, Eisenhower enabled Bradley to advance

⁶⁴ Eisenhower, *The Eisenhower Diaries*, 94.

⁶⁵ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower - The War Years*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler, Jr. (Baltimore, MD: The John’s Hopkins Press, 1970), 4:2053 and 4:2069.

⁶⁶ Alden Hatch, *General Ike: A Biography of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1944), 38.

his own agenda of continuing his attack against the German forces to his front. In so doing, Eisenhower was able to gain Bradley's support for the broad front strategy in return.⁶⁷

With several different superiors to please, Eisenhower's task of establishing sufficient power over them for him to implement his strategy was not a simple one. Eisenhower "used his people skills to bolster his authority as unified commander...[and] took advantage of his forward position and loose reigns to shape the war effort to his own vision."⁶⁸ Additionally, the Supreme Commander made full use of the variety of influence measures that he had at his disposal in gaining the support of his superiors.

General Eisenhower began gathering power with the U.S. Army Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, by consulting with him throughout World War II by telegraph, letter, and in person. Eisenhower began developing this power while working for the Chief of Staff in Washington, DC, as part of the War Plans Division from December, 1941 through June, 1942. After Eisenhower left Washington for England, "[his] life became intertwined with that of Marshall. [He] decided to [write] letters to [Marshall] to keep him informed of his progress in the command of a coalition army, in part because he was so close to Marshall."⁶⁹ This correspondence allowed Eisenhower to not only keep General Marshall informed of events in SHAEF, but also to request the Chief of Staff's input into the various issues which confronted

⁶⁷ Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life*, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 373-374. It appears that General Bradley's support for Eisenhower resulted more out of respect for Eisenhower's firm command decision than out of any significant agreement with the "Broad Front" strategy, but there can be no doubt that, whatever the cause, Bradley supported Eisenhower's plan.

⁶⁸ Todd A. Kiefer, "The Most Reasonable of Unreasonable Men: Eisenhower as Strategic General" (Master of Military Arts and Science thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1999), 47.

⁶⁹ Joseph Patrick Hobbs, *Dear General: Eisenhower's Wartime Letters to Marshall*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), 2.

him. By consulting with Marshall in many smaller issues in earlier years, Eisenhower established power which he was later able to use to gain support from Marshall.

As the Supreme Commander, Eisenhower was also responsible for coordinating what today would be referred to as the various service components, from the United States as well as the British and other Coalition members. Specifically, Eisenhower had to coordinate with General Henry H. Arnold, Commanding General of the U.S. Army Air Force, to ensure that he had the air support he needed to support his operations. Eisenhower was able to gain the support of General Arnold, “who had again voiced his desire for an airborne operation that would have strategic implications,” by using a combination of consultation and legitimate authority methods in dealing with him.⁷⁰ Although it is true that “Generals George C. Marshall...and Henry H. Arnold...had let General Eisenhower know unmistakably that they attached great importance to the employment of airborne units in actual operations deep in enemy territory,” which might lead one to believe that Eisenhower caved in to pressure from above, there are other factors to consider.⁷¹ Specifically, Eisenhower exercised his prerogative as the Supreme Commander and the ground forces commander by cancelling eighteen separate airborne plans by early September of 1944. “In most cases, the cancellations had been prompted by the recognition that the fast-moving ground troops would overrun the objectives before the airborne forces could land.”⁷² While this did not change the desires of the Generals in the War Department to “see what airborne troops could do in actual combat,” they also recognized that General Eisenhower had the legitimate authority to

⁷⁰ MacDonald, “The Decision to Launch Operation Market-Garden,” 436.

⁷¹ Ibid., 435.

⁷² Ibid.

employ forces as he felt necessary.⁷³ Thus, when the opportunity to make use of the airborne forces at his disposal became available, Eisenhower was able to gain support from Arnold with very little effort.

In assessing his relationship with the Combined Chiefs of Staff, Eisenhower came to the conclusion that the balance of power was in his favor and he did not need their support to implement his strategy. Indeed, he advised General Marshall of his thoughts on the organization, dismissing them and their attempts to bypass him as the Supreme Commander not as “anything vicious or even deliberate...simply reflect[ing] their own [British] doctrine.”⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Eisenhower realized that the Combined Chiefs were a vital link holding the Coalition together, and as such he could not ignore them. While he did not need to seek their support, he could not afford to break ties with them, either. This assessment led Eisenhower to keep the Combined Chiefs informed through regular reports on the strategic situation in the European Theater of Operations, while at the same time exercising his prerogatives as the Supreme Commander. In exercising these prerogatives, Eisenhower indirectly used legitimizing tactics, appealing to the decision of “two governments [the British and the UNITED STATES] to accept the principle of unified command” to establish his authority in matters of force organization.⁷⁵

General Eisenhower faced one of the most complex problems possible for a military leader: command of a coalition force. In advancing his strategy as the Supreme Commander, Eisenhower had to balance the interests maintaining the Allied coalition with the interests of his

⁷³ Ibid., 436.

⁷⁴ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower – The War Years*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler, Jr. (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 2:944.

⁷⁵ Eisenhower, *The War Years vol. 2*, 944.

subordinate commanders as well as the actual military requirements of war in the European Theater of Operations. If Eisenhower attempted to simply impose his will on his subordinate commanders or failed to listen to his superiors, the likelihood of his failing would have risen spectacularly. However, by generating power, the ability to influence others, using the techniques of consultation and legitimization, Eisenhower was able to garner enough support from Montgomery, Bradley, Marshall, Arnold, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff to advance and successfully implement his strategy.

General Petraeus

Unlike General Eisenhower, General Petraeus did not generate his own strategy and attempt to advance it. Instead, General Petraeus's task was to advance and implement the "New Way Forward" strategy of the President of the United States, George W. Bush. General Petraeus's first step in advancing the President's agenda was to generate his own vision of what success in Iraq would be, and then to communicate that vision to the target audiences that controlled the resources he would need to achieve that vision.⁷⁶ Having just completed an assignment at Fort Leavenworth as the commanding general of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas during which he and a hand-picked team updated and developed the U.S. Army's counterinsurgency doctrine, it is not surprising to see that General Petraeus's vision for Iraq developed along the same lines. The new doctrine called for "a comprehensive strategy employing all elements of national power" and stressed the importance of

⁷⁶ As a military officer, subordinate to the Commander in Chief, it should go without saying that General Petraeus had to develop his vision within the limits set by President Bush's strategy. Nevertheless, if that point is not self-evident, it is established here.

working along multiple logical lines of operation simultaneously, using a “clear, hold, build” methodology.⁷⁷ The vision that General Petraeus laid out before the strategic actors who controlled the assets and resources he would need to implement his strategy was one of “a representative government in Iraq that upholds the rule of law, respects the rights of its people, provides for their security and is an ally in the war on terrorism.”⁷⁸ This vision was certainly nested within the limits of President Bush’s declared vision for Iraq, and as a result it attracted the scrutiny of the President’s political detractors. As a result of this negative attention, Petraeus had to not only develop his vision, but communicate it in such a manner as to gain the support of those detractors. Petraeus accomplished this task during his testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee during his confirmation hearings by “explaining the change in focus of the new strategy, and discussing the way ahead” in a clear and concise manner which the Committee understood and appreciated.⁷⁹

While Petraeus didn’t require the support of subordinate commanders as Eisenhower had, he did require the support of other peers, including U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Ambassador Ryan Crocker; and the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Michael Mullen. Given that these two senior leaders represented two different departments of the U.S. government, it became readily apparent that Petraeus would have to address both of these men as separate target audiences and approach them differently in his efforts to gain their support. Like Eisenhower, before Petraeus

⁷⁷ Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24: Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Army Publishing Directorate, 2006), 2-1, 5-3 thru 5-7, 5-18. FM 3-24 explicitly states that “clear, hold, build” is not the only viable approach to counterinsurgency, but it is the approach that has become the most familiar to the general public, and the one which General Petraeus adopted for use in Iraq.

⁷⁸ David H. Petraeus, “Iraq: Progress in the Face of Challenge,” *Army*, October 2007, 115.

⁷⁹ Senate Committee on Armed Services, *Nominations Before the Senate Armed Services Committee: Senate Hearing 110-370*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., 2007, 4.

could attempt to influence these audiences, he had to assess his professional and personal relationships with them before deciding what method of generating power he would employ in seeking their support.

General Petraeus's assessment of Ambassador Crocker rested on two of the three same subordinate assessments upon which Eisenhower had relied in assessing his relationship with Montgomery. Just as Eisenhower had done with Montgomery, Petraeus took stock of Crocker's professional abilities as an ambassador, and then assessed his own personal relationship with the State Department representative. Unlike Eisenhower, Petraeus found no need to evaluate the diplomatic relations between his own and an allied country simply because he and Crocker represented the same government.

In assessing Ambassador Crocker's abilities as a diplomat, Petraeus found a State Department officer who "was the type of muddy-boots diplomat who preferred to be abroad rather than at the State Department headquarters in Washington's Foggy bottom neighborhood."⁸⁰ Crocker had served at various embassies throughout the Middle East throughout his career with the U.S. Foreign Service, including the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, during both the Israeli invasion of that country in 1982, and the bombing of the Embassy and the U.S. Marine barracks in 1983.⁸¹ Crocker's other qualifications included his fluency in the Arabic language and his familiarity with the Middle East as a region, as evidenced by his having "been named ambassador

⁸⁰ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq*, (New York, NY: PublicAffairs TM: 2008), 148.

⁸¹ U.S. Department of State, "Crocker, Ryan C.," Office of Electronic Information, Bureau of Public Affairs, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/81479.htm> (accessed January 27, 2010).

five times – to Lebanon, Kuwait, Syria, Pakistan, and now Iraq.”⁸² Crocker was no stranger to difficult situations. In 2001, Crocker had opened the U.S. embassy in Afghanistan after U.S. forces had toppled the Taliban regime earlier that year. Crocker’s performance throughout his career had been exceptional. The U.S. Departments of State and Defense had both recognized him for his accomplishments on multiple occasions, and in 2004 President Bush had “conferred on him the rank of Career Ambassador, the highest in the Foreign Service.”⁸³ Ambassador Crocker was quite obviously fully qualified to serve as the State Department’s representative in Iraq.

Professional qualifications aside, General Petraeus knew that he would also have to have a close personal relationship with Ambassador Crocker in order to successfully implement the President’s strategy. The first positive indication that this would be possible came during Ambassador Crocker’s swearing-in ceremony. In his remarks, Ambassador Crocker “pledged...to aim for ‘unity of effort’ with the military.”⁸⁴ Petraeus found that he and Crocker had several things in common upon which to build a solid working relationship. Crocker had grown up around the military, the son of a U.S. Air Force officer. He, like Petraeus, was also confident in his abilities and decisive in his manner. Both men enjoyed running, and developed the habit of going on runs together whenever possible.⁸⁵ Altogether, General Petraeus’s assessment of the power differences between himself and Ambassador Crocker were positive. Petraeus would not

⁸² Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends*, 148.

⁸³ U.S. Department of State, “Crocker, Ryan C.,” Office of Electronic Information, Bureau of Public Affairs, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/81479.htm> (accessed January 27, 2010).

⁸⁴ Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends*, 149.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

have to generate large amounts of power to achieve support from Crocker as he sought to implement President Bush's strategy.⁸⁶

Given the political sensitivity of the "New Way Forward" strategy, General Petraeus had very little time in which to generate the power he would need to influence Ambassador Crocker, especially as a peer. Ordinarily, this would limit Petraeus's options for generating power with Crocker, forcing him to use more direct power-generating techniques such as generating positional power through political means, or putting his own power in Crocker's service. However, given the fact that the two men had so much in common and, in the end, would have to answer to the same superiors, Petraeus assessed that the power gap between Crocker and himself was relatively small. Petraeus was able to both network with Crocker on a personal level through their commonalities, and place his own power into Crocker's service by treating him as an equal and sometimes senior partner when working with the Iraqi government.⁸⁷ As a result, Petraeus was able to overcome the initial handicap that time placed on him, and quickly develop the power he needed to gain Crocker's support for the new strategy without resulting to more confrontational methods.

In assessing his relationship with Admiral Mullen, General Petraeus had to consider the differences in their positions. As the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Admiral Mullen's considerations overlapped those of General Petraeus and the Army to some extent, but he also

⁸⁶ One could argue that, in seeking a political solution, that it was actually Ambassador Crocker's task to build power and get General Petraeus to support his agenda. While there is no doubt that all of the elements of national power were involved in the new strategy, given the massive footprint of the U.S. military in Iraq, it is apparent that the Department of Defense was the lead agency and thus had responsibility for building support for the implementation of the strategy.

⁸⁷ Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends*, 150.

had considerations unique to the mission of the U.S. Navy and equally as important to the U.S. government. As a result, Admiral Mullen had to choose how to allocate the resources at his disposal, and whether or not to assume any risk to his other missions during that allocation process. Admiral Mullen's choice also included considering the impact that the commitment of any U.S. Marine Corps forces would have on the Navy, as the two forces are inextricably intertwined. The fact that Admiral Mullen had already voiced his disagreement with the President's new strategy served to make Petraeus's job even more difficult.⁸⁸

On a personal level, Petraeus's and Mullen's paths had rarely crossed, and their careers had been vastly different. As "a career Army officer, [Petraeus] had more credibility on ground warfare than did Mullen, a career Navy officer."⁸⁹ This was an important fact when considering that the war in Iraq loomed as the single largest issue within the purview of the Department of Defense. Against the legitimating power that Petraeus held as a practitioner of ground warfare, Mullen held significant positional power as the current CNO, and the President's pick to replace General Peter Pace as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This situation presented the potential for a great deal of friction between the two senior officers, which in turn could hamper the implementation of the President's strategy.

On the basis of this assessment, General Petraeus wisely sought the least confrontational method of building influence with Admiral Mullen. By deferring to Mullen's positional power as the CNO, and his future power as the Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff designee, Petraeus

⁸⁸ Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008*, (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2009), 92.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 252-253. Although author Thomas Ricks is speaking of GEN (Ret.) Jack Keane in this passage, it applies equally to General Petraeus.

placed his own legitimate power into Mullen's service. This action would pay dividends to Petraeus when, months later, as the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mullen would intervene on Petraeus's behalf to "reduce friction between Petraeus and [Admiral "Fox"] Fallon, the commander of U.S. Central Command."⁹⁰

As the MNF-I Commander, General Petraeus had to gain support from a vast array of superiors in order to successfully implement the new strategy. General John Abizaid, the Commanding General of United States Central Command, was Petraeus's immediate superior. Above General Abizaid was the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Peter Schoomaker, and the Secretary of the Army, Secretary Francis J. Harvey.⁹¹ Finally, General Peter Pace, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the new Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, rounded out the members of the military establishment above Petraeus. Additionally, while not directly within General Petraeus's chain of command, the Committees on the Armed Services within both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate held influence over the budgetary resources that Petraeus would require to put the "New Way Forward" strategy into effect.

In conducting his assessment of his relationship with these superiors, General Petraeus was able to discount the need to influence many of them. President Bush had effectively bridged the power gap between Petraeus and the majority of these actors. During a meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on December 13, 2006, President Bush had listened to the Chiefs last attempts to

⁹⁰ Ricks, *The Gamble*, 252.

⁹¹ Secretary Harvey would serve as the Secretary of the Army until March 9, 2007, only a little more than one month after Petraeus assumed command of MNF-I on January 27, 2007. Pete Geren would succeed Harvey as the 20th Secretary of the Army at that time.

persuade him against committing an additional five brigades to Iraq.⁹² At the conclusion of the meeting, President Bush made the decision to implement the “surge” and, “fully under[standing] the power of his office,” made it expressly clear that he expected full support from the service chiefs.⁹³ The President’s use of his positional power significantly reduced the number of actors that General Petraeus would have to influence later on, as the service chiefs had been essentially ordered to support the strategy. However, General Petraeus would still have to influence these senior officers in an effort to gain their commitment to his vision for implementing the strategy. Those actors that remained, the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, were absolutely critical to the successful implementation of the strategy. General Petraeus approached the task of winning support from the U.S. Congress from the beginning of his confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee, using legitimating tactics, rational persuasion, and coalition tactics to gain the Committee’s support.

During his opening remarks, Senator Carl Levin established Petraeus’s credentials as a legitimate voice on military matters in general and on the conduct of counterinsurgency operations in particular by citing Petraeus’s “noteworthy...leadership of the team that wrote the new counterinsurgency manual for the Army and Marine Corps.”⁹⁴ Petraeus built on this foundation in his own opening remarks, immediately defining the security of the Iraqi populace as the key and essential task for U.S. forces, and, more importantly, providing a clear and concise

⁹² Bob Woodward, *The War Within: A Secret White House History 2006-2008* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2008), 286-289.

⁹³ Woodward, *The War Within*, 290.

⁹⁴ Senate Committee on Armed Services, *Nominations Before the SASC*, 2.

definition of “security” to the Committee, thus reducing the possibility of confusion between military and civilian definitions.⁹⁵

Once he had established his credentials, General Petraeus moved on to the use of rational persuasion, answering the direct questions of the Committee with well thought-out responses, which he grounded in verifiable facts and his own well-informed opinion and expertise. When Senator McCain asked Petraeus what he thought the consequences would be if the United States were to announce that it would withdraw completely from Iraq within four to six months, Petraeus framed his answer in terms of the effects of such a decision on several different groups, both in Iraq as well as in the Middle East, and the effects on the world as a whole.⁹⁶ This type of compound answer served to increase Petraeus’s legitimate power with the Committee by demonstrating his deep understanding of the problem and also served as an act of rational persuasion by presenting multiple logical arguments with factual evidence to substantiate them. Not trusting that he had built enough power to bridge the gap between himself and the Committee based on his legitimacy and rational persuasion alone, General Petraeus turned to yet another method of generating power.

Petraeus’s final method for generating power was to use coalition tactics to aid in bridging the power gap between himself and the senators sitting on the Senate Armed Services Committee. Senator McCain had been a proponent of sending several additional brigades to Iraq

⁹⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁹⁶ Committee on Armed Services, *Nominations Before the SASC*, 15. Petraeus described the effects of a sudden U.S. withdrawal from Iraq in terms of the sectarian violence that could ensue, the opportunity that such a withdrawal would provide to “an international terrorist organization”, and the effects on the global economy should oil flow from the region be disrupted.

for several years prior to President Bush's announcing the new strategy.⁹⁷ On January 10, 2007, Stephen Hadley, the National Security Advisor, "tracked down McCain [and said] 'If you don't support it, John, nobody will... You've got to decide, because this is the surge we're going to get.' McCain said he would support the president."⁹⁸ This was the beginning of Petraeus's coalition, built for him by Stephen Hadley, to generate the remaining power he required to gain the support of the Senate. However, it was not the complete coalition. Senator Inhofe also provided himself to Petraeus as a coalition partner during the confirmation hearing. Rather than asking Petraeus open-ended questions which could later provide openings for different interpretations, Inhofe told Petraeus exactly what he wanted to hear, turning his requests into specific statements such as "Tell us a little bit about how more [*sic*] effective it would be if you have more capability to respond to some of these needs immediately than going through the system that we are more accustomed to."⁹⁹ This type of narrowly-worded questioning allowed Petraeus to answer very precisely and in depth. In so doing, Petraeus was able to increase his legitimacy with the other members of the Committee. On the surface, this appears to be another use of a legitimating method, but upon further consideration, it is evident that Senator Inhofe was also offering Petraeus the opportunity to increase his legitimacy, in effect offering to join him as part of his coalition to implement the strategy. In taking advantage of this opportunity, Petraeus made use of the coalition-building method, even though he was not the one to attempt to form the coalition.

⁹⁷ Woodward, *The War Within*, 318.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 314. Although this example of coalition building is not one put into action by Petraeus himself, there can be little doubt that the general, as the face of the president's new strategy, benefitted from the support that McCain was able to provide him from his position on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

⁹⁹ Committee on Armed Services, *Nominations Before the SASC*, 20.

General Petraeus found himself in the unenviable position of having to implement the controversial strategy of a controversial president. In order to do so, Petraeus had to distill the President's strategy into a vision which he could communicate to several target audiences, and generate power between himself and a host of senior military and civilian leaders. By properly articulating a clear vision of how to implement the President's strategy, accurately assessing who his target audiences were, the power differences between himself and those target audiences, and using non-confrontational methods of power generation to bridge those gaps in power, General Petraeus was able to gain enough support from his peers and superiors to successfully implement President Bush's "New Way Forward" strategy. If Petraeus had attempted to use more confrontational methods to gain support from the strategic leaders whose support he required, it is quite possible that the Senate Armed Services Committee never would have confirmed him as the MNF-I commander. Without Petraeus to implement it, President Bush's strategy may well have died on the vine.

Evaluation of the Theory

So, does the theory of gaining support from subordinates, peers, and superiors hold? If a strategic leader sufficiently addresses the three tasks of developing and communicating a vision, generating sufficient power to bridge the gaps between himself and his peers, and influencing his superiors in order to gain their support for the implementation of the strategy, will he generate sufficient power to successfully put his strategy into effect?

The easy answer is unequivocally in the affirmative, and the defense of that answer becomes readily apparent when the words of the question are rearranged. To put it more simply, if the strategic leader fails to implement his strategy, then obviously he did not "sufficiently" address the three tasks. Such a specious argument has no place here, but nevertheless its existence must be noted and addressed for the sake of completeness.

A better question to ask in evaluating the theory is whether or not sufficiently addressing the three tasks *always* provides the opportunity to build sufficient power for the strategic leader to implement his strategy? There are only two possible answers to this question: the affirmative and the negative cases.¹⁰⁰ Since the two answers are mutually exclusive, elimination of one leaves the other as the only possible solution. In order to eliminate one of these answers, either the argument must be valid in every instance, which would prove the affirmative case, or there must be a counterexample which disproves the argument just once, thus proving the negative case.¹⁰¹ Another method of proving the affirmative case is to eliminate the negative case by showing that it cannot exist. It is important to keep these two methods of proving the affirmative case in mind in approaching the argument of whether or not the theory of developing support is sound or not.

The question of whether there is ever the possibility that a strategic leader could not generate enough power to implement his strategy, no matter how successful he was in building power with his subordinates, peers, and superiors is one which must receive an answer before examining the argument that “sufficiently addressing the three tasks always provides the opportunity to build sufficient power for the strategic leader to implement his strategy.” In other words, could there ever be an instance in which a strategic leader was able to share his vision with and gain commitment from every other actor possible, and still not have enough power to implement the strategy? This is an impossible situation for one very simple reason: if all of the actors whom, collectively, will decide whether or not to support the strategy commit to and share

¹⁰⁰ Logically speaking, since the word “always” is an absolute, there are only two answers: “always”, and the negative case of “not always”. The negative case includes not only the argument of “sometimes”, but also the opposite absolute of “never”.

¹⁰¹ Daniel Bonevac, *Simple Logic*, ed. Robert C. Solomon (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 54-55.

the vision of the strategic leader, then there cannot be any power weighing in favor of *not* implementing the strategy. As a result, the strategic leader in this situation would have 100% assurance that he could implement his strategy.¹⁰²

The answer to this question, which provides a clear measure with which to evaluate the theory, becomes even clearer when placed in the context of the two historical cases already used. Re-phrased in the context of General Eisenhower's situation, the question would be: "Is there any possibility that General Eisenhower could not have successfully implemented his 'Broad Front' strategy even if he had successfully gained complete support from General Bradley, Field Marshal Montgomery, Generals Marshall and Arnold, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff?" The answer is simply that there would have been no such possibility if General Eisenhower had been able to secure unanimous concurrence with his plan.¹⁰³

The same logic applies to General Petraeus and his situation in attempting to implement his "Surge" strategy in support of President Bush's "New Way Forward." In this case, the question, in context, becomes: "Is there any possibility that General Petraeus could have been unsuccessful in implementing his strategy even with the complete support of Ambassador Crocker, Admiral Mullen, and the legislators in Congress?"¹⁰⁴ Again, the answer is that the

¹⁰² This is not to say that the strategy will be successful, only that the strategic leader is guaranteed of sufficient support to implement it.

¹⁰³ The assumption which is necessary to reach this conclusion is that the five actors mentioned (Bradley, Montgomery, Marshall, Arnold, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff) represented the sum total of actors that could exert influence to prevent Eisenhower from implementing his strategy. While this assumption is certainly a simplification of the case, the underlying idea remains: if Eisenhower had secured the support of every possible actor that could work against him, he would have unanimous concurrence with his strategy, and could be completely certain of being able to implement the strategy.

¹⁰⁴ The same assumption is necessary here, as is the same simplification. Likewise, the same conclusion is apparent from the underlying idea of unanimous support.

possibility simply does not exist. With the unanimous support of all of the actors that could influence the situation, there would be nothing to stand in the way of Petraeus's implementation of the "Surge".

The other extreme case, that the strategic leader fails to gain any support whatsoever for his strategy, requires examination as well. In this case, since all of the actors who, as above, will collectively decide whether or not to implement the strategy decide not to support the strategic leader, then there is no power acting against them in favor of implementing the strategy. Just as in the previous case, the strategic leader in this situation has 100% assurance as well. The difference is that the strategic leader in this case rests assured that his strategy does *not* have the support it needs for implementation.

Again, the historical cases of Generals Eisenhower and Petraeus provide context to support this conclusion. Asking the question of whether either of these two strategic leaders could have successfully implemented their strategies if they had absolutely no support from their subordinates, peers, or superiors yields a negative answer. One might argue that Eisenhower and Petraeus could successfully implement their strategies on their own, without support from outside actors. This argument goes completely against the premise of this study, which is that the strategic leader must gain support because other actors have access and control over assets and resources that the strategic leader requires to successfully implement his strategy to begin with.

These two extreme cases demonstrate that all of the power necessary for the implementation of a strategy rests in a closed system of actors. There is no source of power

outside of this system that can counteract what occurs inside of it.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, in every case there exists the opportunity for the strategic leader to build sufficient power to implement his strategy. Taken altogether, it is evident that the theory of power generation developed at the beginning of this study is indeed logically sound in all cases. It is the strategic leader's task to sufficiently address the three tasks of developing and communicating a vision, generating power amongst his peers, and influencing his superiors to support his strategy. The strategic leader's ability to generate power with those actors is truly what determines whether or not the leader will gain the support he needs to implement his strategy.

Conclusion

This study set out to test the hypothesis that strategic leaders can best implement their strategies by obtaining broad support for them from subordinates, peers, and superiors. This monograph built upon the theories of Peter Senge, John Kotter, and Gary Yukl to develop a theory that would allow senior leaders to implement their strategies. After developing it, the study then applied that theory to two separate historical examples with over 60 years between them. The purpose of this separation in time was to ensure as little overlap as possible between the actual participants in the case studies, thus eliminating interference between those two cases.

Examining the historic example of General Eisenhower's efforts to build support for the implementation of his "broad front" strategy and more contemporary example of General Petraeus's efforts to build support for the implementation of President Bush's "new way forward"

¹⁰⁵ It is imperative to note here that it is completely possible that events may occur which cause the actors within the system of power to change their minds as to whether or not to support or not support a strategy, but it is not the events which change the balance of power, it is the decisions of the individual actors.

strategy, several similarities in the approaches that these strategic leaders took become evident. Both generals identified their target audiences as they sought to identify those actors could help them implement their strategies. Both men assessed their relationships with these target audiences and, in so doing, decided what methods they would use to bridge the power gaps between their selves and those audiences. Using several methods, both leaders successfully bridged those power gaps and gained the support they needed to successfully implement their strategies, thus demonstrating that the theory held in at least some cases.

Next, having proven that the theory held true in those two cases, this study sought to prove through logical analysis that the theory would hold in other examples as well. To achieve this end, the study demonstrated that the system of actors which could influence the implementation of a strategy was a closed one, acknowledging the fact that external events can affect the actors and whether or not they decide to support the implementation of a strategy or not. The significance of this closed system is that there is always an opportunity, no matter how slight, for a strategic leader to garner enough support to implement his strategy.

A comparison of these results to the original hypothesis demonstrates the validity of that hypothesis. Strategic leaders can best implement their strategies by gaining broad support from their subordinates, peers, and superiors. The better a strategic leader is at tapping in to the closed system of actors, the more support he is likely to garner, and the more likely he is to succeed. By addressing subordinates, peers, and superiors, strategic leaders address categories into which all of the actors in the system must fall. Thus, the best way for a strategic leader to get enough support for his strategy is by addressing all of the categories of actors, thereby ensuring that he doesn't inadvertently overlook the opportunity to gather more support.

As stated in the beginning, this study does not seek to be prescriptive, nor does it seek to be a step-by-step guide to successful implementation of a strategy. It has sought instead to provide insight into how strategic decisions are made and implemented in an effort to aid those who may one day find themselves in similar positions. While the theory holds, in the end it is still

the responsibility of the strategic leader to make use of the theory and exercise initiative and judgment in developing and pursuing support for his “ideas for employing the instruments of national power...to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Department of Defense, *Dictionary of Military Terms*, 524.

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